

Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (YRITFC)
Craig Chythlook, Executive Director

Good morning, Madam Chair and members of the Board. My name is **Craig Chythlook**, my folks are Joe and Molly Chythlook. I ~~have~~^{am} been a life-long salmon user, hunter, and provider. I've owned and operated my own Bristol Bay S03T permit for over two decades, and like so many others here, I am already yearning and am immensely privileged to expect the first taste of our salmon. ~~I would also like to follow suit with my colleagues and~~ thank our Elders and our Chiefs for being here, ~~for~~ guiding our engagement, and ~~for~~ ensuring we are working in appropriate ways to build and focus on relationships and unity. *for our official positions please refer to 230*

~~Currently,~~ I serve as the executive director of the Yukon Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, composed of 44-member Tribal Governments, authorized by tribal resolution, whose mission is to protect the health and well-being of our people, our future generations, and all Alaskans and Canadians who rely on the health of our salmon. The Purpose of the Commission, as stated in our Constitution, is to act as a unified voice for the conservation and restoration of all Yukon River Fisheries: ~~protect our traditional way of life and well-being, establish a comprehensive management plan and program, based upon distinct customary and traditional indigenous knowledge and practices, while striving for co-management to ensure meaningful and substantive Tribal/ First Nation participation in all aspects of fish Stewardship.~~

For several consecutive years, **Yukon River families have not consistently ~~not~~ harvested salmon.** In 2025, ADF&G and USFWS reported **complete closures for chum and Chinook**, with **Pilot Station sonar** showing well below goals and **Eagle sonar** far under the bilateral **71,000-fish Canadian-origin Chinook rebuilding target** set for 2024–2030. The department's **2025 Stock Status Overview** now shows the **Yukon summer chum coming in with record lows** and **fall chum under a formal stock-of-concern framework.**

During this year's BB BOF meeting, ~~conservative action was introduced to the board,~~ and the board ~~decided on~~^{took} a much more conservative approach for Chinook bound for the tributaries and smokehouses in the Nushagak, while also conserving Chinook stocks in the Wood River drainage. Our tribes ~~also~~ participated in the AYK BOF meetings, where we caucused and came to a consensus on further restricting our abilities to meet our ANS needs, to be responsible, to have accountability, and to ensure we are doing our part for our future generations, upholding an appropriate relationship not just to the salmon, but to the land, to our waters, but taking into consideration our traditional knowledge regarding our relationship with all ecology and environment.

~~We don't need a complete review here, but~~^{Yukon River} our tribes have been discussing in this and other forums for decades, we see the sustainable salmon policy, mixed-stock policies,

and C&T determinations, we've watched the consistent decline of our ANS needs not being met – and these policies clearly state that the Board and Department recognize, in pristine habitat areas, we must manage for sustainable salmon fisheries, use the best available science, and protect marine habitats and their migratory routes – we must protect weak mixed stocks, we must prioritize subsistence, during this meeting and in other forums, we are getting a lot of false information about the water quality issues.

The Yukon watershed has had C&T Designations for decades, we've operated under dual management, and ANLICA VIII for decades – within the watershed, as stated, our tribes have modified our gear, our methods, imposed self-governing restrictions, and most notably in this forum – for years we've closed significant time and area, and now, full closures because we do not have a harvest stable surplus on commercial, sport, or subsistence – what has benefited the conservation of our terminal stocks – the methods that have been used in the Yukon, Kusko, BB and elsewhere are time and area closures, not self-regulated caps, our subsistence users have not have the privilege to self-monitor, self-govern, or self-regulate – an industry led, fishery dependent data approach is not a management plan, it's not a conservation plan, it's a business plan.

The continued self-governed prosecution of the Area M fishery doesn't make sense, not from a biological standpoint, given that over 90% of the fish targeted in this fishery are going somewhere else.

When can we declare stock of concern designations for the fish being intercepted in this fishery? In times of abundance, a historical argument of this is just how we've always done things, which might make sense based on our common use clause, however, now what this feels like, what this has always felt like and looked like – is maintaining and exclusive right of fish, not based on biology, not based on science, but based on relationships, precedence, and incorporation.

Please, what we are asking, what you have heard from the brilliance of our Elders, our leadership, is to consider our history, the impacts of going without, and the truly devastating chronic impacts of inaction and a decades-long history of biased interpretation of what's in the realm of reality in regards to this statement, our Elders have been here for decades staying many iterations of this statement: "Our rivers are clean, and in times of low abundance, depleted salmon stocks should be allowed to recover or, where appropriate, should be actively restored; diversity should be maintained to the maximum extent possible, at the genetic, population, species, and ecosystem levels.

Quyana for your time and for listening to our public testimony.

let the fish through.